



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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September 6, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W T Fujioka", is written over the typed name.

WASHINGTON, D.C. UPDATE

FY 2008 Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act

On September 5, 2007, the Senate began consideration of S. 1645, the FY 2008 Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act. Section 225 of the bill would prohibit the exchange, auction, transfer, reduction, or disposal of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) lands at the West Los Angeles Medical Center (WLAMC). This provision was authored by Senator Feinstein. Leases involving services for homeless veterans would not be impacted.

Prior to consideration of S. 1645, the Administration released a policy statement opposing Section 225, saying that it constituted an "earmark" that would reduce a potential revenue source to the Federal Treasury. When debate began, Senator DeMint (R-SC) offered an amendment to strike the Feinstein language. Senators Feinstein, Boxer, and Reed (D-RI), who is the manager of the bill, all opposed the DeMint amendment, which was defeated by a 66 to 25 vote. Several Republican Senators voted with a majority of Democrats to defeat the amendment.

Today, the Senate approved S. 1645, by a vote of 92 to 1, and the measure will then be sent to conference with the House bill (H.R. 2642) which was passed on June 15, 2007 by a 409 to 2 vote. While the House bill does not contain a provision concerning the

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WLAMC, Representative Waxman has indicated that he will work with House conferees to request the inclusion of the provision in the final conference agreement. It is expected that a conference agreement will pass both chambers by wide margins. While the President has stated his intent to veto appropriations bills that exceed his budget request, and this measure is \$4.1 billion more than the level requested by the President, we are now hearing that the White House has indicated that the President will sign the popular Military Construction-VA measure.

The County's Federal Agenda includes a policy to oppose proposals which would transfer or allow private commercial development of land at the VA's WLAMC. Our Washington, D.C. advocates have worked closely with senior staff to Senator Feinstein and Representative Waxman for several months on this issue and collaborated on potential strategies and legislative vehicles to support this proposal.

It is anticipated that a final conference agreement could be considered in late September or early October.

Public Hearing of the VA-CARES Commission

On September 6, 2007, the Department of Veterans Affairs' VA-CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) Commission will hold a public hearing to examine potential land use options at the WLAMC. The CARES Commission was chartered by Congress to analyze the VA's health care infrastructure in a manner similar to the method used by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) to evaluate military base infrastructure. In 2004, the CARES Commission recommended that a study occur of potential excess or surplus property at the West Los Angeles campus which should consider "all options for divestiture, including outright sale (or) transfer to another public entity." Unlike the BRAC, recommendations of the CARES Commission are not binding and would have to be approved by the VA.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:GK
RT:DD:hg

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist